

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

DHA-02 AID-05 /073 W

----- 083544

R 260610Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 206

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10062

FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRAS 1042 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO
BOMBAY/CALCUTTA. DTD 25 JUL 75

QUOTE:

MADRAS 1042

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: THE MOOD IN MADRAS

1. SUMMARY. ONE MONTH AFTER THE IMPOSITION OF THE EMERGENCY, VISITORS, BOTH FOREIGN AND INDIAN, FROM OTHER PARTS OF INDIA CONTINUE TO TELL US THE AIR SEEMS FREER IN MADRAS AND THAT THERE IS MORE OPEN DISCUSSION AND LESS FEAR HERE, CERTAINLY THAN IN DELHI BUT ALSO THAN IN OTHER INDIAN CITIES. IF THIS IS TRUE, MOST OF THE CREDIT MUST GO TO CHIEF MINISTER KARUNANIDHI AND HIS OPENLY-EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO THE EMERGENCY, THE ARRESTS, AND THE CENSORSHIP. BUT MRS. GANDHI'S LONG SHADOW SEEMS TO BE GRADUALLY ECLIPSING EVEN THE ATMOSPHERE ENGENDERED BY KARUNANIDHI'S INDEPENDENT STANCE AND, APART FROM THE DMK AND A FEW INTELLECTUALS, ACQUIESCENCE IN HER BOLD SUPPRESSIVE MEASURES SEEMS TO BE INCREASING DAILY.

2. ONCE THE INITIAL SHCOK WAS OVER, MOST MIDDLE CLASS PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE DISCOVERED (WITH A SENSE OF RELIEF) THAT THE
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EMERGENCY SO FAR HAS NOT DIRECTLY TOUCHED THEM. THE

ARRESTED OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE NORTHERNERS HAVING LITTLE IF ANY POLITICAL OR EMOTIONAL APPEAL IN SOUTH INDIA, AND THE ABROGATION OF RIGHTS IS FOR MOST STILL AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT EXCEPT FOR CENSORSHIP WHICH HAS IN ANY CASE NOT BEEN AS STRINGENTLY APPLIED IN TAMIL NADU AS ELSEWHERE. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, SOME BUSINESSMEN AND INDUSTRIALISTS SAY THEY ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING THE BENEFITS OF GREATER DISCIPLINE AND HARDER WORK ON THE PART OF THEIR EMPLOYEES AND QUICKER RESPONSES FROM THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY.

3. MOST AMONG THE FEW DIRECTLY ADVERSELY AFFECTED HAVE ACCEPTED THE SITUATION WITH NOTABLE RESTRAINT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE ON THE PART OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS HERE, ESPECIALLY THE HINDU WHICH HAS BEEN FOLLOWING SUCH A CAUTIOUS POLICY THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, ONE DOES NOT FIND IN THIS MORNING'S EDITION EVEN THE CENSOR-APPROVED ACCOUNT OF PARLIAMENT'S ACTION YESTERDAY IN MAKING THE PRESIDENT'S DETERMINATION OF AN EMERGENCY NON-JUSTICIABLE. TWO WEEKS AGO A RECEPTION WAS HELD TO FELICITATE THE EDITOR OF THE MADRAS MAIL ON HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE ALL INDIA NEWSPAPER EDITORS CONFERENCE. OF THE TEN SPEAKERS ONLY ONE REFERRED TO THE PRESS CENSORSHIP AND HE DID NOT CONDEMN IT BUT ASKED ONLY THAT IT BE EXERCISED BY JOURNALISTS THEMSELVES RATHER THAN BUREAUCRATS. AND THE EDITOR OF THE AMIL, IN RESPONDING TO THE TRIBUTES, MANAGED TO SPEAK FOR HALF AN HOUR WITHOUT REFERRING IN ANY WAY TO THE PRESENT SITUATION. IN JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS KIND OF CAUTION, KASTURI OF THE HINDU TELLS ME THAT HE HOPES THAT IF THE SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS THE ALLAHABAD VERDICT MRS. GANDHI MAY RELAX PRESS CENSORSHIP IF THE PRESS HAS NOT ANTAGONIZED HER IN THE MEANTIME.

4. SIMILARLY, ON THE POLITICAL FRONT WITH A LEADER LIKE KAMARAJ, WHO IS PRIVATELY UNHAPPY WITH DEVELOPMENTS BUT SEEMS UNABLE TO DECIDE WHAT HE SHOULD DO ABOUT IT. SOMEONE WHO SAW HIM THE OTHER DAY TOLD ME THAT HE LIMITED HIS OBSERVATIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE TO SAYING IT WAS TOO BAD THE BRITISH HAD EVER LEFT INDIA.

5. THE MAJOR EXCEPTION, OF COURSE, IS KARUNANIDHI WHO HAS SO CONFIDENTIAL

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FAR SHREWDLY EXPLOITED MRS. GANDHI'S ACTIONS TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE. AS WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING, HE HAS SKILLFULLY MANAGED TO ESTABLISH A CLEARLY INDEPENDENT AND CRITICAL STANCE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS PARTY, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY AVOIDING GIVING THE PRIME MINISTER ANY EASY PRETEXT FOR REMOVING HIM. OUR READING IS THAT THIS HAS GIVEN THE DMK A BADLY-NEEDED BOOST AND A NEW SENSE OF CONFIDENCE, DIRECTION, PURPOSE. IN ADDITION, MANY OF HIS FORMER CRITICS, INCLUDING SOME OF THE

BRAHMAN INTELLECTUALS, NOW EXPRESS, ALBEIT GRUDGINGLY, THEIR ADMIRATION FOR THE POSITION HE HAS TAKEN AND THE SKILL AND BOLDNESS WITH WHICH HE HAS MAINTAINED IT.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 207

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10062

QUOTE:

6. ONE OF THE BRAHMIN INTELLECTUALS WHO HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN OPPOSITION TO THE EMERGENCY IS 80 YEAR OLD K. SANTH-ANAM, FORMERLY EDITOR OF SWARAJYA AND A FORMER GOI MINISTER AND A LEADING MEMBER OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. ON JUNE 26 HE ISSUED A STATEMENT CONDEMNING MRS. GANDHI'S "DRASTIC AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MEASURES" AS "A PRELUDE TO A STATE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL ANARCHY", BUT IT WAS NOT CARRIED IN ANY NEWSPAPER. HE HAS SUBSEQUENTLY SENT LETTERS IN THE SAME VEIN TO NEWSPAPER EDITORS AND OTHER OPINION LEADERS AND LAST WEEK HE SENT AN APPEAL TO ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT URGING THEM TO EXERCISE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AS "GUARDIAN OF THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE." HE HAS HAD A FEW ENCOURAGING REPLIES, INCLUDING ONE FROM MRS. VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT, NEHRU'S SISTER. BUT THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY IS ISOLATED AND IN ANY CASE COUNTS FOR VERY LITTLE; AS ONE INTELLECTUAL REMARKED MATTER OF FACTLY LAST NIGHT: "MRS. GANDHI HAS COMPLETELY LOST THE SUPPORT OF THE INTELLECTUALS AND SHE COULDN'T CARE LESS."

7. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION A FEW PEOPLE EXPRESS FEAR THAT MRS. GANDHI MAY HAVE PERMANENT DESIGNS ON THE CONSITUION

AND RECOGNITION THAT INSTITUTIONS, ONCE UNDERMINED, MAY NOT
BE EASY TO REBUILD. MOST, HOWEVER, TAKE THE POSITION OF WAIT
AND SEE, MEANWHILE ACCOMMODATING THEMSELVES TO THE NEW
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STATE OF AFFAIRS WITHOUT UNDUE DIFFICULTY EXCEPT FOR SOME EMBAR-
RASSMENT (AT LEAST IN THE COMPANY OF WESTERNERS) OVER THE
RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESS. IF THE LOCAL ASTROLOGERS ARE CORRECT
THAT MRS. GANDHI'S BAD LUCK PERIOD COMES TO AN END JULY 26,
SHE HAS GOTTEN THROUGH IT ALL RIGHT HERE.
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UNQUOTE.
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